

EARLY ASSURANCE APPLICANTS: CREDENTIALING

Introduction

Credentialing is the process by which you assemble materials and have them submitted in support of your application to a health professions program. At Binghamton, credentialing is carried out through what is known as a composite (sometimes called committee) evaluation system. Under this arrangement you submit, or have submitted, a variety of materials which are placed in a credentials file. When this file is complete, the Pre-Health Professions Advisor edits this material, adds his own comments, and writes a composite evaluation. It is this evaluation, along with 3 attached letters which is sent, upon your request, to the health professions schools to which you have applied as an early assurance applicant. Detailed in the following section are the steps you must follow to complete your credentials file.

Instructions for Completing Your File

A. Open a File

The first thing you should do is to come to the Pre-Health Office and open a credentials file with the Pre-Health Secretary. This will allow you to obtain your own account and password with the office.

The following is a checklist of all the material that needs to be present in your credentials file. Please make sure to thoroughly read pages 2 through 6.

1. Autobiography
2. Photograph
3. Student Information Form
4. Personal Information Form
5. Transcript
6. Letters of Recommendation & Waiver Slips
7. Copy of your Early Assurance Program Application
8. Envelopes & Postage
9. Postcards & Postage
10. Signed Letterhead Stationary
11. Tracking Sheet
12. Credentialing Fee

B. Deadlines

In order to expedite the preparation of your evaluations, given the short turn around for Early Assurance Programs, you should have all materials in your credentials file by the following deadlines:

Buffalo Medical EAP	January 15th
Upstate Medical EAP	June 1 st
Buffalo Dental EAP	May 1 st

This includes materials which you generate yourself and letters which others submit on your behalf. Failure to adhere to these instructions will impede the processing of your evaluation. Remember, **you** are **responsible** for **your** own actions.

1. Autobiography

This should be at least four, typed (double spaced), pages in length and may be less formal than your application essay. You should constructively present the events in your life and not limit yourself to your college years, as you might have done with your application essay. [For example, your autobiography should include, but not be limited to demographics (i.e. place and date of birth, parents' names, occupations, etc.); information which may not have been presented in your application essay]. This is an opportunity for you to convey to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor information about yourself which may not have come out during conversations or which may not be available from other materials in your file. If you need to exceed four pages, please do so. It's better to have to read additional pages than to sacrifice information about you for the sake of brevity. Remember, this should NOT be identical to your application essay. While some overlap is to be expected, since you are the author of both, merely submitting a copy of your application essay will not satisfy this requirement.

2. Photograph

This should be a standard color print (4"x 6" on photo paper with high resolution). You should be the center of attention in the photograph (head and shoulders shots are best, but not mandatory). This is to assist the Advisor in identifying you when your evaluation is being written. Please write your name on the back of the photo. Also, if you are not the only person in the photo, please clearly identify yourself. Please use a recent photograph and not one left over from high school. You look quite different now and the high school photo will not be as associative as a current one.

3. Student Information Form

The student information form solicits information from you which will be used by the Pre-Health Professions Advisor in preparing your evaluation. It is available on the Pre-Health web page: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/pre-health/applicant.html>. Please type your answers into the pdf document and then print it. You may attach additional sheets of paper if necessary.

4. Personal Information Form

The personal information form solicits address and telephone information from you, in case we need to get in touch with you for some reason. It also contains a records release. It is available on the Pre-Health web page: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/pre-health/applicant.html>. Remember, if your address and/or phone number changes, please inform the Pre-Health Professions Office.

5. Letters of Recommendation & Waiver Slips

A minimum of three (3) letters of recommendation are required. One (1) **must** (No Exceptions!) come from a **faculty** member in your **major** department. In addition, two (2) must come from a science faculty (i.e. biology, chemistry, physics) member. The others may be from research supervisors, faculty outside your major, employers, coaches, etc. I DO NOT WANT character references from people who have only superficial knowledge of you. Examples would be from a senator, congressman, minister, etc. If you have such a reference submitted, it will not be used in preparing your evaluation. Also, letters of recommendation should come from college faculty and others who are familiar with you in the recent past. Recommendations from your high school years may still be used by an Early Assurance Applicant, but should be limited to one letter (unless prior arrangement has been made with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor). You may have more than three (3) letters; in fact, the typical student usually has four (4) or five (5). However, seven (7) is the maximum you will be allowed. You must tell us how many letters to expect.

You **MUST** waive your right to review all letters. Please print, sign and date the **waiver slips** from the Pre-Health website: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/pre-health/applicant.html>. You need one waiver slip per recommendation letter. You will then give the signed slip to each author of your recommendation letters. You may wish to sign a few extra to leave in your file, in case some of your letters arrive without them. Letters must be written on departmental letterhead stationery, business stationery, personal stationery, or plain white typing paper, depending on the author of the letter. All letters should be typed because up to three of the most thorough ones will be photocopied and sent along with your composite evaluation as supporting documentation. Handwritten letters simply do not photocopy as well as typed ones.

Letters of recommendation should be sent directly from the author to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor, and not pass through your hands. The correct address for the Pre-Health Professions Advisor is:

(on campus)	Dr. W. Thomas Langhorne, Jr. Pre-Health Professions Advisor Academic Advising
(off campus)	Dr. W. Thomas Langhorne, Jr. Pre-Health Professions Advisor Academic Advising Binghamton University P.O. Box 6000 Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

An address slip with this information is available on Pre-Health website: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/pre-health/applicant.html>.

6. Copy of Your Application

A clear **photocopy** (not the original) of your Early Assurance Program (Buffalo, Upstate) application is required. If your program has switched to a web based application, you can print copies of your web based application. In printing copies of your application from web based applications systems, it is important that you print a copy of your application before you finalize and transmit it. Several of the application systems have mechanisms which lock out changes once you finalize and transmit the application. Unfortunately, these lock out mechanisms prevent you from printing the application. Furthermore, some web based applications only display a part of your application essay on screen. Rather than scrolling through the essay and printing three or four overlapping copies to get the full essay, it is suggested that you export the essay to MS Word and then print a copy from Word. Simply include this copy in with the pages you were able to print directly from the web page.

7. Transcripts

Your official Binghamton University transcript must be sent to Dr. Thomas Langhorne. To order your transcript, please follow these directions:

Log onto the BU Brain: <http://bubrain.binghamton.edu>.

Click on “student records”

Request Printed Transcript

Issued to: Dr. Thomas Langhorne

Transcript Type: Official

Street Line 1: Academic Advising AB G-18

Click “Continue”

Print Transcript: Hold for grades

Submit changes

8. Envelopes & Postage

A #10 legal/business envelope (approximately 4-1/8" x 9-1/2") must be submitted for each school to which you are applying. **Envelopes other than this size will NOT be accepted.** These envelopes must be neatly printed in ink or typed and correctly addressed with the full street address to the professional schools. Addresses can be obtained from the various official professional school guidebooks or through schools’ web pages. On the envelope there should be enough postage to cover 2 ounces at the first class rate in effect at the time. Leave the return address area **BLANK**. Be sure to print your name under the envelope flap in pencil. Envelopes deviating in any way from the foregoing specifications **will not be accepted.** Also, the envelopes you provide to us must be self sealing. These are sold under a variety of brand names (e.g., Peel and Seal, Press and Seal, Grip Seal, etc.) and are available.

Examples

ACCEPTABLE

(Blank)

2 oz. postage

Office of Student Admissions
SUNY Upstate Medical University
766 Irving Ave.
Syracuse, NY 13210

UNACCEPTABLE

J. Jones
11 My St.
Bing, NY

1 oz. postage

SUNY-Upstate
Medical School
Syracuse, N.Y.

***IF POSTAL RATES CHANGE, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING IN THE ADDITIONAL POSTAGE**

Postcards & Postage

A stamped self-addressed postcard must be inserted into each envelope. This will be sent to you by the professional schools when they receive your evaluation. These are available from any post office.

Example:

Front

Your Name
Your Address

Back

Your name evaluation has been received by **name of medical school**.
DATE: _____

***IF POSTAL RATES CHANGE, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING IN THE ADDITIONAL POSTAGE**

9. Signed Letterhead Stationery

The Pre-Health Professions Advisor uses your signed letterhead stationery to write your composite evaluation letter for each school for which you are applying. Therefore, you are required to sign letterhead stationery for each school to which you are applying, plus three for the office. For example, if you are applying to Upstate and Buffalo Medical, you will need 5 pieces of signed letterhead stationery. If you are unsure of the number of programs you are applying to, it's better to sign too many than too few. **IT IS NOT TO BE GIVEN TO OTHERS UPON WHICH TO WRITE THEIR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION. If letters of recommendation arrive written on our stationery, they will not be accepted.** This is NOT the same as the waiver slips, which are 3" x 5" pieces of paper on which the waiver statement is printed and which you should give to those people writing letters of recommendation for you. Please note, letterhead stationery should be signed before you leave for the summer (or winter break, if applying to Buffalo Med EAP) and can be obtained from the pre-health secretary. If we have to mail it to you during the summer, you will be charged for the postage.

10. Tracking Sheet

A tracking sheet containing the names of all the schools to which you are applying, as well as certain personal information must be submitted. The tracking sheet is available on the Pre-Health web page: <http://www2.binghamton.edu/pre-health/applicant.html>. The Pre-Health Office needs you to update us on your known interview schedule and the status of your application (accepted, waitlisted, denied). This is where the Pre-Health Office gathers its statistics.

This is a list for record keeping purposes only and is NOT an authorization to send your evaluation to schools. When professional schools request your composite evaluation, you must specifically request that it be sent. It will not be sent otherwise. You can make such requests in person, via the telephone, by fax or by email (prhealth@binghamton.edu or ldatto@binghamton.edu). Merely placing the school's name on the tracking sheet is not considered appropriate notification.

11. Credentialing Fee

You must pay the \$35 credentialing fee by **check or money order only**. Checks/money orders should be made payable to IFR 90170. Cash will not be accepted. Fee waivers are available for those who receive a significant amount of financial aid. Please ask for a fee waiver petition from the Pre-Health secretary if you think you are eligible.

Concluding Remarks

After your file is complete, as verified by the secretary, it will be put in a line-up for your evaluation to be written. This is done strictly on a first come, first served basis. If any of the above items are found to be missing from your file or submitted incorrect, it goes back to an inactive status until completed. Once completed, it is again put at the END of the line-up. [Any of the above items initially submitted incorrect will be either filed (but not counted) or disposed of]. Also, you must submit all your materials at once. Submitting items piecemeal makes it more difficult for both you and us to keep track of them. REMEMBER, Early Assurance Programs have very strict deadlines and it is up to you to submit materials in a timely manner so that we can produce your evaluation and have it arrive at the professional school prior to their deadline.

IF YOU HAVE AN INCOMPLETE FILE, YOU WILL NOT BE NOTIFIED. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK ON THE STATUS OF YOUR FILE. You may do this by logging into your on-line file monitoring account. If you find an item is missing, you may want to wait a day or two and check again. At certain busy times of the year the mail gets very heavy and filing a given day's mail may take several days. After checking a second time, if you still find the anticipated item is missing, contact the Pre-Health Secretary by email (ldatto@binghamton.edu) or by phone (607-777-6305) [1:00-3:30pm].

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE REGULATIONS. If you have questions at any time, ask them right away. Do not make unwarranted assumptions about the way file completion operates. Remember, **YOU AND YOU ALONE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CORRECT COMPLETION OF YOUR FILE.**

Final Comment

The composite evaluation and the individual letters submitted by your references have been prepared with the specific goal of your application to a health professions graduate program in mind. As such, they may be relevant to your application to a summer research program, or to your application for summer employment in a medical setting. However, they are not pertinent to your application to any other sort of program. While the Pre-Health Professions Office will send your evaluation in support of the former types of programs, it will not do so for the latter. If you think you may be in a situation to want to use your individual recommendations for other than the programs outlined above, you should ask your referees to produce two copies of their letters: once copy for the Pre-Health Professions Office and the other for a Career Development Center file.

Summary

Credentials file completion is a lengthy and complicated process, as are most of the processes involved with professional school application. It is important that you read instructions carefully and thoroughly and ask questions when you don't understand. Please feel free to call or visit the Pre-Health Professions Office with your questions and concerns.